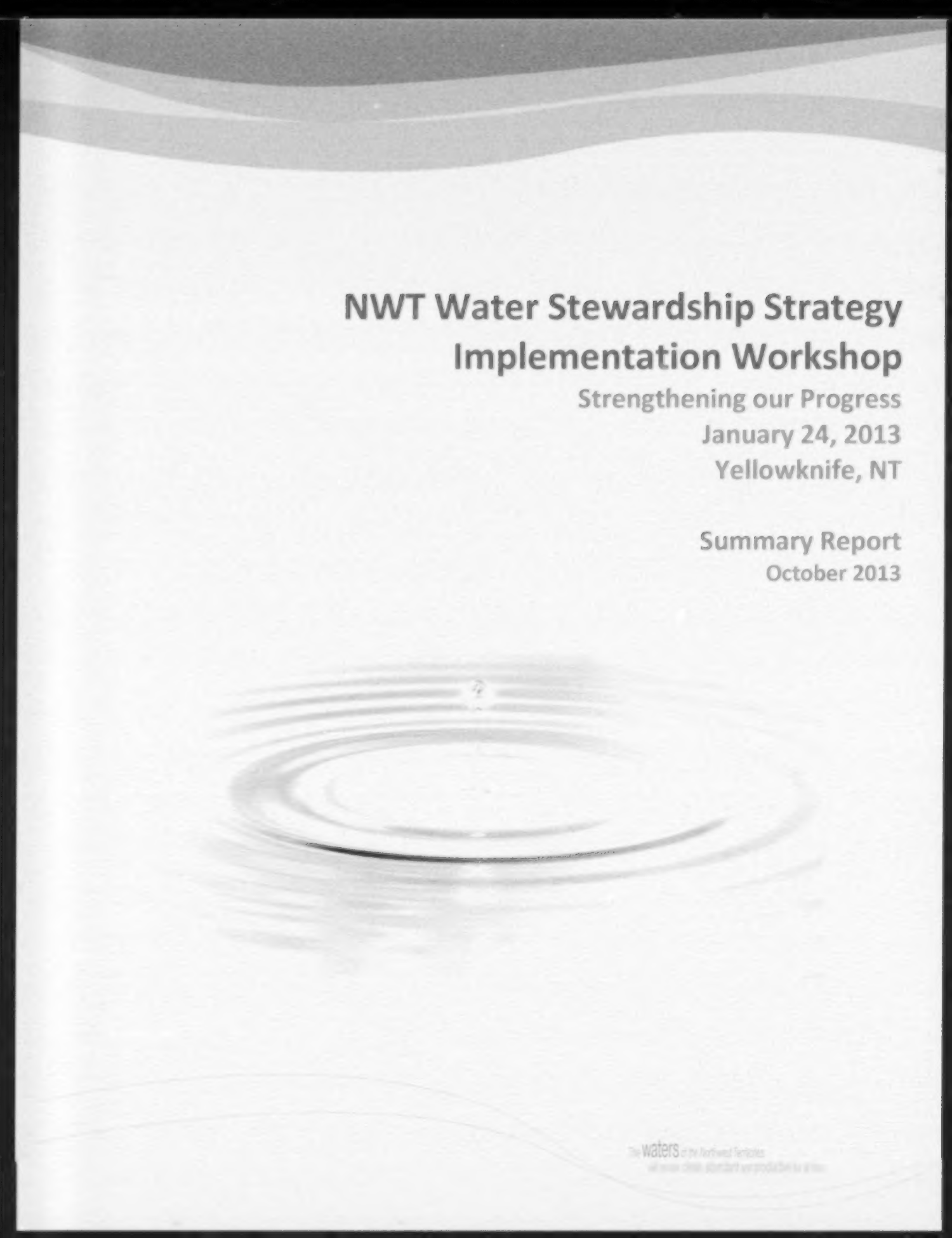




# **NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Implementation Workshop**

**Strengthening our Progress**

**January 24, 2013**

**Yellowknife, NT**

**Summary Report**

**October 2013**

## Introduction

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (GNWT-ENR) invited water partners and other interested organizations to discuss the implementation of *Northern Voices*, *Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy* (the Water Strategy) and *NWT Water Stewardship: A Plan for Action (2011-2015)* (the Action Plan) during a one-day workshop on January 24, 2013 in Yellowknife, NT.

The Water Strategy Implementation Workshop, titled *Strengthening our Progress*, followed the NWT Environmental Monitoring Annual Results Workshop<sup>1</sup> hosted by AANDC and GNWT-ENR January 21-23, 2013.

These collaborative workshops were a valuable way to gain knowledge about water-related monitoring, and to build relationships with existing and potential new water partners. The NWT Environmental Monitoring Annual Results Workshop provides a platform for NWT water partners to report on progress at regular intervals (Key to Success 1.3.A in the Action Plan). The Water Strategy Implementation Workshop allowed water partners to review and discuss implementation activities and progress to date, and discuss and prioritize solutions and next steps for moving forward in the 2011-2015 implementation phase (Key to Success 1.1 F).

To view the Water Strategy Implementation Workshop report and previous workshop reports on the development and implementation of the Water Strategy, visit:  
[www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/?q=publications](http://www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/?q=publications)

## Participants

Water partners, including members of the Aboriginal Steering Committee, Aboriginal, federal and territorial government representatives, northern regulatory boards and agencies, academic institutions, environmental and research non-government organizations, and other interested organizations (see Appendix A for a list of participants), attended the Water Strategy Implementation Workshop.

## Workshop Objectives

The objective of the workshop was to review progress on the Action Plan's Keys to Success during the first two years of implementation (April 2011 to January 2013) and ask

- 1) What have we done well? What are the important components for successful implementation of a Key to Success?
- 2) What did not work? What can be learned from this experience and what can be done differently?

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<sup>1</sup> To access the report, go to:

[http://sdw.enr.gov.nt.ca/nwtdp\\_upload/2012-13\\_CIMP\\_RESULTS\\_WORKSHOP\\_FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](http://sdw.enr.gov.nt.ca/nwtdp_upload/2012-13_CIMP_RESULTS_WORKSHOP_FINAL_REPORT.pdf)

## **Workshop Summary**

The workshop highlighted successes achieved in projects, activities, and collaborations. Water partners also identified areas with room for improvement, since implementation of the Water Strategy began in April 2011. Discussions focussed on lessons learned rather than on the detailed progress of specific projects as this was addressed during the preceding NWT Environmental Monitoring Annual Results Workshop.

Four break-out sessions helped facilitate discussions. Participants were given the opportunity to rotate through three sessions. They were asked to answer the questions above, and to discuss creative solutions to improve the implementation of future activities. The Work Together, Know and Plan and Use Responsibly components of the Strategy and Action Plan were discussed. The Check our Progress component was not specifically discussed during the break-out sessions.

The four break-out sessions were:

- Work Together – Communication and Information Management
- Work Together – Engagement and Partnerships
- Know and Plan – Research and Monitoring
- Use Responsibly – Regulatory

### **Work Together – Communication and Information Management:**

#### **Information management – The NWT Discovery Portal**

The Water Strategy highlights the importance of effective decision-making at all levels, supported by the availability of accurate and current data or information. Keys to Success under 1.2 in the Action Plan outline action items to address information management needs for the implementation of the Water Strategy. Discussions at the workshop focused on sharing monitoring and research results through the NWT Discovery Portal<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Workshop outcomes - Success:*

- The NWT Discovery Portal was launched in 2011. The NWT Centre for Geomatics and the AANDC NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program are developing an instructional video and offer training on how to use the Portal.

#### *Workshop Outcomes - Areas with room for improvement:*

- Resources will be needed to train partners to use and populate the portal to fully implement the Key to Success relevant to the NWT Discovery Portal.

#### **Communication tools**

Communication is essential for functioning partnerships. Annual Water Strategy implementation workshops discuss and plan communication-related activities on a regular basis. Keys to Success under 1.3 in the Action Plan outline action items to improve communication between water

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<sup>2</sup> <http://nwt.discoveryportal.enr.gov.nt.ca/>

partners and better inform interested parties about the Water Strategy within and outside the NWT.

Workshop discussions focused on successful communication initiatives and future communication needs.

*Workshop Outcomes - Successes:*

- GNWT-ENR's 2012 and 2013 water calendars provide plain language information about funding sources for community-based monitoring (2012) and steps to produce a source water protection plan (2013). Water partners and communities gave positive feedback on these communications tools.
- Regular meetings with the Aboriginal Steering Committee provide updates and improved communication with the NWT Aboriginal governments.
- The vision and goals of the Water Strategy have been shared nationally in collaboration with groups like the *Forum for Leadership on Water*; and by keynote speakers at events such as the Assembly of First Nations, *Water Rights Conference 2012- Asserting our Rights to Water*.
- Presentations at meetings within and outside the NWT, and participation on national groups, including the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and associated working groups keep interested parties informed about the Water Strategy.

*Workshop Outcomes - Room for Improvements:*

- Increased communication with communities is important. Radio advertisements, especially in the Aboriginal languages, have been suggested as a communication tool to reach all NWT residents. Visiting communities is an excellent way to share information and discuss the importance of the Water Strategy. Teleconferencing can be a useful tool when it is not possible to travel to a community.
- More Water Strategy products and materials need to be plain-language and translated into the NWT official Aboriginal languages.
- Water curriculum should be promoted in NWT schools.
- A plan to address communication, engagement and public education should be finalized and implemented. Communication and engagement with different target audiences will help GNWT-ENR and AANDC reach out to all NWT residents and water partners.
- There is a need for increased regular communication about the Water Strategy and updates on new initiatives in the time between annual workshops—for example, via a newsletter or other communications tool. Water partners identified [www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca](http://www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca), launched in April 2013, as an important tool for promoting the Water Strategy and providing updates on its implementation.
- Some water partners expressed a desire for more support from the federal departments. Improved communication could increase the understanding of the importance of the Water Strategy federally.

### **Work Together – Engagement and Partnerships**

Sound water stewardship requires strong, collaborative partnerships between water partners. Several Keys to Success under 1.1 in the Action Plan are focused on partnerships. Engagement activities are identified under Keys to Success 1.3A and 1.3C and transboundary negotiation engagement under Key to Success 1.4. Workshop discussions focused on successful and ongoing engagement activities and future needs.

#### *Workshop Outcomes - Successes:*

- The Slave River Partnership ([www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/?q=srdp](http://www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/?q=srdp)) is a good example of how communities, agencies, universities, and governments can work together to address concerns.
- Water partners have developed strong relationships based on realistic expectations and a willingness to help each other.
- Aboriginal consultation on the transboundary negotiations with Alberta began in August 2012. Regional workshops held across the NWT fulfilled consultation obligations and provided results of recent community-based monitoring activities. Consultation with local and regional Aboriginal leadership will continue until a final agreement is signed with Alberta.
- Aboriginal and public engagement has continued since March 2012 to ensure the NWT negotiation team understands NWT residents' interests and concerns related to transboundary water resources.

#### *Workshop Outcome - Room for Improvement:*

- Fostering external partnerships while making sure the needs of all water partners are addressed is a challenge, given the human and financial resources required to establish and maintain each partnership.
- In the NWT, increased communication between water partners is required. This may be face to face or through other methods, for example, regular phone calls or the water strategy website. Knowing water partner's needs and forming support networks between the water partners are necessary to better implement the Action Plan.
- Communication barriers need to be identified and understood for more effective internal partnerships. These barriers can be overcome by focusing on non-text based information sources, such as videos and radio messages.

### **Know and Plan – Research and Monitoring**

Know and Plan actions focus on how we monitor and better understand the aquatic ecosystem, including changes in the quality and quantity of water, and biological indicators, such as fish. The Keys to Success under 2.1 and 2.2 of the Action Plan are related to water monitoring.

research, community involvement in monitoring and research, including community-based monitoring, and source water protection.

Discussions during the workshop focused on researcher/community relationship building, and how to integrate this into future research and monitoring.

*Workshop Outcomes - Successes:*

- Strengthened partnerships and clear research objectives and design are achieved when researchers work directly with communities to develop and design a research project. Collaborative research between Inuvialuit communities and the University of Victoria has been successful. Community members' contributions were financially compensated and the communities involved took interest in the project. This was a collaborative learning process<sup>3</sup>.
- Research completed through NWT CIMP regarding landscape changes in the Peel watershed was a crucial and important project. This project follows the Pathway approach<sup>4</sup> and provides an example of how to conduct a research project together with a community.
- The Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management program in the Dehcho<sup>5</sup> region has addressed community concerns through its monitoring programs. Water quality equipment was available in the Dehcho in 2011-2012. This strengthened ongoing monitoring efforts by adding capacity and generating information.

*Workshop Outcomes - Room for Improvements:*

- The most extensive water monitoring in the NWT is agency-led monitoring—including AANDC, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Environment Canada. Concerns were raised regarding changes to existing environmental legislation and the potential for budget reductions for some of the agency-led monitoring. It was suggested that water partners need to work together to secure long-term funding for monitoring.
- There is a need to communicate the results and significance of long-term monitoring to communities and other water partners. Attention needs to be given to managing and sharing the monitoring data itself, not just the resulting reports and conclusions.
- Mapping of monitoring and research locations would provide a visual means of highlighting these activities and promote further opportunities for water partners to discuss future monitoring and research priorities.
- Large funding sources like the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) should be better informed about research priorities from a northern perspective.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://mapping.uvic.ca/mackenziedelta>

<sup>4</sup> [http://sdw.enr.gov.nt.ca/nwtdp\\_upload/CIMP%20Pathway%20booklet.pdf](http://sdw.enr.gov.nt.ca/nwtdp_upload/CIMP%20Pathway%20booklet.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dehcho.org/aarom.htm>

- There are a number of research projects underway. There is a need to facilitate ongoing discussions between researchers, communities and other water partners to ensure studies provide relevant information to the North.
- Community members must be trained to carry out monitoring and research activities. A plan and attached funding to invest in the regions and build capacity is necessary.
- Community-based monitoring faces challenges when it is financed on a one-year basis and does not have the security of multi-year funding. It is challenging for communities to maintain their monitoring priorities while trying to secure financial funding, as funding criteria can be restrictive.
- A water monitoring inventory that summarizes water quality and quantity monitoring programs in the NWT needs to be finalized.
- Baseline groundwater monitoring data, along with traditional knowledge research, is needed for the central Mackenzie Valley due to increasing oil and gas development.

### **Use Responsibly – Regulatory**

The development, review and implementation of water-related regulatory procedures and guidelines support sound water stewardship. The Keys to Success under 3.1 and 3.3 of the Action Plan are related to procedure and guideline development and community water licence compliance. Discussions during the workshop focussed on an overall update on regulatory initiatives as well as some areas with room for improvement.

#### *Workshop Outcomes- Successes*

- AANDC and the Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley are in the final stage of approving the joint *Guidelines for the Closure and Reclamation of Advanced Mineral Exploration and Mine Sites in the NWT*. These guidelines set out clear expectations for proponents submitting closure and reclamation plans as a condition of their water licences. (Note: The guidelines were approved in the fall of 2013).
- Communities and other water partners have identified challenges related to preparing municipal water licence applications and complying with water licence requirements. To begin to address these challenges, training has been provided to develop water licence applications and fulfill existing licence requirements, such as compliance monitoring of effluent or wastewater. To date, the training has been led by a variety of water partners, including NWT Water Board, Wek'èzhii Land and Water Board, Ecology North and AANDC. Ongoing outreach and engagement continue to be very important.

#### *Workshop Outcomes – Room for Improvement:*

- Academia, industry and communities can all play an important role in developing the guidelines for the Water and Effluent Quality Management Policy.
- Linkages between the Water Strategy and the regulatory boards could be stronger by collaborating on educational tools. For example, the differences between Aquatic Effects Monitoring Programs, Surveillance Network Programs and monitoring to support environmental assessment must be explained in plain language.

### Future Focus Areas

Workshop participants identified key areas of focus to collectively “strengthen our progress” while implementing the Water Strategy and Action Plan. This is necessary in order to build on successes to date, and to carefully consider areas with room for improvement. Four key areas of focus were identified during the plenary session as priorities:

- **Partnerships** – Maintaining existing partnerships and forming new partnerships is necessary, while taking into consideration the capacity of partners including financial and human resources.
- **Communication and engagement with water partners and residents** – The NWT water stewardship website is the primary communication tool to provide regular updates to water partners and the public. A plan outlining communication, engagement and public education approaches and activities will be developed and implemented. The use of social media will also be explored.
- **Community-based monitoring** – Community-based monitoring and source water protection is a priority throughout the NWT to ensure clean and safe drinking water and healthy aquatic ecosystems. Ongoing collaboration between water partners is needed to overcome challenges such as securing funding and building community capacity.
- **Transboundary negotiations** – Completing a bilateral agreement on transboundary water between the NWT (represented by AANDC and the GNWT) and Alberta that will meet the vision of the Water Strategy is a priority. Ongoing Aboriginal and public engagement will be required.

The results from the workshop helped inform the *NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Implementation Progress Report April 2011-March 2013*. To view the progress report and related documents, visit [www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/?q=publications](http://www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/?q=publications)

The Water Strategy Implementation Workshop was intended to strengthen the implementation process by building on our successes to date. This was done by learning from these positive experiences and noting areas with room for improvement. The Water Strategy is a living document. The implementation process can be adapted to ensure water partners can successfully meet the goals of the Water Strategy in the years to come.

## Appendix A: Workshop Participants

| <b>Aboriginal Governments</b>                                          |                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leon Andrew                                                            | Sahtu Secretariat Inc.                                     |
| Norm Snowshoe                                                          | Gwich'in Tribal Council                                    |
| Richard Binder                                                         | Inuvialuit Game Council/Inuvialuit Regional Corp           |
| Tim Heron                                                              | Northwest Territory Métis Nation                           |
| Tom Unka                                                               | Northwest Territory Métis Nation                           |
| Camilia Zoe-Chocolate                                                  | Dene Nation                                                |
| <b>Regulatory Boards</b>                                               |                                                            |
| Angela Plautz                                                          | Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board                      |
| Helga Harlander                                                        | Gwich'in Land and Water Board                              |
| Brett Wheeler                                                          | Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board                            |
| Mark Cliffe-Phillips                                                   | Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board                            |
| <b>Industry, Environmental Non-Government Organizations and Others</b> |                                                            |
| Karin Clark                                                            | Wek'eezhii Renewable Resource Board                        |
| Janet Boxwell                                                          | Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board                          |
| Kris Maier                                                             | Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board                          |
| Christine Wenman (morning only)                                        | Ecology North and Wilfrid Laurier/ENR Partnership          |
| Karen Hamre                                                            | Protected Areas Strategy                                   |
| Stephen Kakfwi                                                         | Independent Consultant                                     |
| Sara Brown                                                             | NWT Association of Communities                             |
| Sarah Rosolen                                                          | Aurora Research Institute                                  |
| Helga Shield                                                           | Imperial Oil                                               |
| Mike Low                                                               | AAROM Dehcho                                               |
| George Low                                                             | AAROM Dehcho                                               |
| Roland Hall (morning only)                                             | University of Waterloo                                     |
| Brent Wolfe (morning only)                                             | Wilfrid Laurier University                                 |
| David Livingstone (morning only)                                       | Independent Consultant                                     |
| Celine Gueguen (morning only)                                          | Trent University                                           |
| Carolyn Dubois                                                         | Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation                        |
| <b>Government of the Northwest Territories</b>                         |                                                            |
| Ernie Campbell – Opening Remarks                                       | Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) |
| Mary Tapsell                                                           | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Erin Kelly                                                             | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Katarina Carthew                                                       | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Jennifer Fresque-Baxter                                                | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Jennie Vandermeer                                                      | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Katherine Trembath                                                     | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Lorraine Brekke                                                        | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Jeremy Armitage                                                        | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Meghan Beveridge                                                       | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Stefan Goodman                                                         | ENR – Land and Water                                       |
| Evangelos Kirizopoulos                                                 | ENR – Geomatics                                            |

|                            |                                              |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Jane McMullen              | ENR – Policy and Strategic Planning          |
| Brian Sieben               | ENR – Climate Change Programs                |
| <b>Federal Departments</b> |                                              |
| Michele Culhane            | AANDC – Water Resources Division             |
| Annie Levasseur            | AANDC – Water Resources Division             |
| Shawne Kokelj              | AANDC – Water Resources Division             |
| Patti Dods                 | AANDC – Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program |
| Claire Marchildon          | AANDC – Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program |

## **Appendix B: Agenda**

NWT Water Stewardship Strategy  
Implementation workshop  
January 24, 2013  
Strengthening our Progress  
Tree of Peace, Main Boardroom, Yellowknife

### **Agenda**

8:15 Coffee

8:30 Welcoming Remarks (Ernie Campbell, Deputy Minister ENR)

8:45 Open Meeting – Objectives of the workshop, Logistics and Roundtable Introductions  
(Katarina Carthew, ENR)

9:00 The History of the WSS (Stephen Kakfwi)

9:15 Alberta-NWT Transboundary Water Management Agreement Negotiations update  
(Meghan Beveridge, ENR)

9:30 Communication and Engagement (Michele Culhane, AANDC and Jennifer Fresque-Baxter)

- Website
- Annual Report
- Communication and Engagement Strategy
- Monitoring Inventory

10:15 Format of the Break-out Sessions  
(Jennifer Fresque-Baxter, ENR)

10:30 Break-out Session. Rotation 1

11:15 Break-out Session. Rotation 2

12:00 Lunch (provided)

1:00 Break-out Session. Rotation 3

1:45 Plenary Session

- Break-out groups reports back (Facilitated by Jennifer Fresque-Baxter, ENR)
- Future Priorities and Strategic Directions to Move Forward (facilitated by Erin Kelly, ENR)

4:30 Close Day